AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended) A computer-implemented method of facilitating a distributed search for a procurement request, comprising:

receiving the procurement request from a user, wherein the procurement request is subject to organizational procurement controls, and wherein the procurement request involves requesting goods and/or services;

requesting a remote supplier to conduct a remote search to satisfy the procurement request, wherein the remote supplier is an external supplier and/or vendor who is located outside of the organization to which the user belongs;

initiating a local search of a local information source;

receiving results of the remote search;

filtering results of the remote search by applying the organizational procurement controls to the results of the remote search, wherein the organizational procurement controls include at least one of, an upper limit on a price, an upper limit on a quantity, a prohibition against a given supplier, a limit to a given brand, a limit to a given model, a limit on a delivery option, and a limit on payment terms, and wherein the remote information source comprises an electronic marketplace, whereby the organizational procurement controls can be applied to results of the remote search which is performed by the remote supplier;

merging said remote search results with results of the local search; and

presenting said merged search results to the user.

1   2. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2   filtering said remote search results with a set of local rules.

1   3. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein said filtering comprises

2 editing said remote search results according to a set of rules regarding information

3 that may be presented to the user.

1   4. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2   selecting said remote information source from multiple information

3 sources.

1   5. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said remote search is

2 conducted without the user being connected to the remote information source.

1   6. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the remote information

2 source employs a user interface different from a user interface employed by the

3 local information source.

1   7. (Original) The method of claim 6, wherein said presenting comprises

2 displaying said merged search results with the user interface employed by the

3 local information source.

1   8. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said requesting comprises

2 identifying to the remote information source a context in which to execute the

3 remote search.

1   9. (Original) The method of claim 8, wherein said context comprises an

2 identity of the user.

1   10. (Original) The method of claim 8, wherein said context comprises an

2   identity of an organization operating the local information source.

1   11. (Original) The method of claim 8, wherein said context comprises a

2   language.

1   12 (Canceled).

1   13. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said remote search and said

2   local search are performed at least partially in parallel.

1   14. (Currently amended) A computer readable storage medium storing

2   instructions that, when executed by a computer, cause the computer to perform a

3   computer-implemented method of facilitating a distributed search for a

4   procurement request, the method comprising:

5   receiving the procurement request from a user, wherein the procurement

6   request is subject to organizational procurement controls, and wherein the

7   procurement request involves requesting goods and/or services;

8   requesting a remote supplier to conduct a remote search to satisfy the

9   procurement request, wherein the remote supplier is an external supplier and/or

10   vendor who is located outside of the organization to which the user belongs;

11   initiating a local search of a local information source;

12   receiving results of the remote search;

13   filtering results of the remote search by applying the organizational

14   procurement controls to the results of the remote search, wherein the

15   organizational procurement controls include at least one of, an upper limit on a

16   price, an upper limit on a quantity, a prohibition against a given supplier, a limit to

17   a given brand, a limit to a given model, a limit on a delivery option, and a limit on

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18 payment terms, and wherein the remote information source comprises an

19 electronic marketplace, whereby the organizational procurement controls can be

20 applied to results of the remote search which is performed by the remote supplier;

21   merging said remote search results with results of the local search; and

22   presenting said merged search results to the user.

1   15. (Currently amended) A method of conducting a distributed electronic

2   search for a procurement request concerning a desired procurement item, wherein

3   the procurement request is subject to organizational procurement controls, and

4   wherein the procurement request involves requesting goods and/or services,

5   comprising:

6   receiving from a user a description of an item the user desires to procure;

7   issuing a request to a remote supplier to conduct a first search for items

8   matching said description, without the user connecting to the remote procurement

9   information source, wherein the remote supplier is an external supplier and/or

10 vendor who is located outside of the organization to which the user belongs;

11   providing the remote procurement information source with contextual

12 information for said first search;

13   performing a second search of a local procurement system for items

14 matching said description;

15   receiving a first set of results responsive to said first search;

16   filtering said first set of results by applying the organizational procurement

17 controls to the first set of results of the remote search, wherein the organizational

18 procurement controls include at least one of, an upper limit on a price, an upper

19 limit on a quantity, a prohibition against a given supplier, a limit to a given brand,

20 a limit to a given model, a limit on a delivery option, and a limit on payment

21 terms, and wherein the remote information source comprises an electronic

22 marketplace, whereby the organizational procurement controls can be applied to

23   the first set of results of the remote search which is performed by the remote

24   supplier; and

25   presenting to the user, through a single interface, said first set of results

26   and a second set of results responsive to said second search.

1   16. (Original) The method of claim 15, further comprising:

2   authenticating one or more of the user and the local procurement

3   information system to the remote procurement information source.

1   17. (Original) The method of claim 15, further comprising:

2   selecting the remote procurement information source from a set of

3   procurement information sources.

1   18. (Original) The method of claim 15, wherein said issuing comprises

2   providing the remote procurement information source with information for

3   identifying a context in which to execute the requested search.

1   19. (Original) The method of claim 15, wherein said filtering comprises

2   removing from said first set of results any items that violate the procurement

3   rules.

1   20. (Original) The method of claim 19, wherein the procurement rules are

2   designed to restrict items that may be procured by the user.

1   21. (Original) The method of claim 15, wherein said first search and said

2   second search are performed at least partially in parallel.

1   22. (Currently amended) A computer readable storage medium storing

2   instructions that, when executed by a computer, cause the computer to perform a

3   method of conducting a distributed electronic search for a procurement request

4   concerning a desired procurement item, wherein the procurement request is

5   subject to organizational procurement controls, and wherein the procurement

6   request involves requesting goods and/or services, the method comprising:

7   receiving from a user a description of an item the user desires to procure;

8   issuing a request to a remote supplier to conduct a first search for items

9   matching said description, without the user connecting to the remote procurement

10   information source, wherein the remote supplier is an external supplier and/or

11   vendor who is located outside of the organization to which the user belongs;

12   providing the remote procurement information source with contextual

13   information for said first search;

14   performing a second search of a local procurement system for items

15   matching said description;

16   receiving a first set of results responsive to said first search;

17   filtering said first set of results by applying the organizational procurement

18   controls to the first set of results of the remote search, wherein the organizational

19   procurement controls include at least one of, an upper limit on a price, an upper

20   limit on a quantity, a prohibition against a given supplier, a limit to a given brand,

21   a limit to a given model, a limit on a delivery option, and a limit on payment

22   terms, and wherein the remote information source comprises an electronic

23   marketplace, whereby the organizational procurement controls can be applied to

24   the first set of results of the remote search which is performed by the remote

25   supplier; and

26   presenting to the user, through a single interface, said first set of results

27   and a second set of results responsive to said second search.

1   23. (Currently amended) A system for facilitating a distributed search for

2   information for a procurement request, wherein the procurement request is subject

3   to organizational procurement controls, and wherein the procurement request

4   involves requesting goods and/or services, comprising:

5   a local information source configured to provide information to local users

6   through a first user interface;

7   a communication module configured to enable said local information

8   source to communicate with a remote supplier, wherein the remote supplier is

9   configured to provide information to users through a second user interface

10   different from the first user interface, and wherein the remote supplier is an

11   external supplier and/or vendor who is located outside of the organization to

12   which the user belongs;

13   a set of rules regarding information that may be displayed to a first local

14   user; and

15   a processor configured to initiate, in response to a request from the first

16   local user:

17   a remote search of the remote information source; and

18   a local search of said local information source;

19   wherein results of said remote search are filtered by applying the

20   organizational procurement controls to the results of the remote search, wherein

21   the organizational procurement controls include at least one of, an upper limit on a

22   price, an upper limit on a quantity, a prohibition against a given supplier, a limit to

23   a given brand, a limit to a given model, a limit on a delivery option, and a limit on

24   payment terms, and wherein the remote information source comprises an

25   electronic marketplace, whereby the organizational procurement controls can be

26   applied to results of the remote search which is performed by the remote supplier

27   and then merged with results of said local search for display to the first local user

28   through the first user interface.

1   24. (Original) The system of claim 23, further comprising:

2   authentication means for authenticating one or more of the system and the

3 first local user to the remote information source.

1   25. (Original) The system of claim 23, wherein said remote search and

2 said local search are performed in parallel.